

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Measles Immunity

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**1) How can a measles outbreak happen in the U.S. when so many children are vaccinated?**

Although the U.S. may have high vaccination coverage in children, many are still unvaccinated and are susceptible to measles infection. This outbreak serves as a reminder that a person can still get exposed to diseases that have been virtually eliminated in the U.S. and become infected due to unvaccinated and infectious people traveling to the U.S.

**2) Who is at highest risk for getting measles?**

People at highest risk are those who are unvaccinated, pregnant women, infants under six months of age, and those with weakened immune systems.

**3) How can I be sure I am not at risk?**

If you have received two doses of the MMR vaccine you are considered fully immunized against the measles and *should not* need additional vaccinations. Two MMR vaccinations are 99 percent effective in preventing you from getting measles from an infected individual. You can also get a blood test to check for measles immunity. If you have had prior measles illness documented by your doctor, you are considered immune.

**4) Do adults need to be vaccinated against measles?**

All U.S. adults born during or after 1957 should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine, unless they can show they either had the vaccine or measles disease or have a blood test that shows they are immune to measles. For certain groups of adults (for example, those who provide healthcare), documentation of two doses of the MMR vaccine is necessary to be considered fully vaccinated.

Some adults who were vaccinated for measles years ago as children may now be susceptible to the virus. Previously immunized adults should talk to their healthcare provider about their immune status and possibly getting a measles booster or blood test to check for immunity.

More specific recommendations for measles vaccination are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/measles/default.htm>.

**5) Are there people who should not get the MMR vaccine?**

Yes, some people should not get MMR vaccine or should wait before getting it. This includes persons with allergies to components of the vaccine and those with medical conditions that preclude vaccination (e.g., pregnancy). If you have further questions about whether to get the vaccine, discuss them with your healthcare provider.

**6) Can adults who were previously vaccinated still get the measles?**

Yes. Adults who received one dose of measles vaccine may have some protection against the virus, but are considered susceptible and may still contract a milder version of measles. That's because with the passage of time, a person's protection from childhood vaccines may decrease.

Natural boosting comes from being exposed to a person with measles. That exposure creates antibodies and strengthens the body's ability to later fight off an infection. Over time, the body's memory cells may forget if not exposed to disease and have reduced ability to fight off infections.

**7) Where can I get the measles vaccine or blood test to check for immunity?**

Contact your personal healthcare provider or local health department to determine whether you need the MMR vaccine or immunity blood test. Visit <http://www.ualhd.org/members.html> for a list of local health departments.

**8) What if I am exposed to measles and don't know my vaccination status or I never had the MMR vaccine?**

Individuals who may have been exposed to measles and have not been vaccinated should stay home (no work, school, church, shopping, or recreational activities where one may come into contact with the public) for 21 days from the date of exposure.

The MMR vaccine may prevent disease if given within 72 hours of exposure to measles. Immune globulin (IG) *may* prevent or reduce severity of disease if given within six days of exposure.

**NOTE:** It is very important to follow the directions given by your healthcare provider and public health in order to protect your own health, and the health of those around you.